

Virtual Curriculum & Achievement Sub-Committee Report
Monday, April 12, 2021
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose of a presentation and discussion of recommendations from the Outdoor Learning Working Group of the CPSD COVID-19 Task Force.

Present: Member Weinstein, Chair; Member Rachel; Member Rojas

Others Present: Dr. Carolyn Turk, Janet MacNeil, Susan Agger Andrea Zuniga

The meeting started at 6:00 pm. Member Weinstein is the chair, read the call of the meeting.

After some introductions, Chair Weinstein gave an overview and explained the purpose of the meeting, agenda and introduced Dr. Turk on the work of the Outdoor Learning Working Group of the COVID-19 Task Force (established by motion #20-310 by Member Weinstein, Mayor Siddiqui, and Vice-Chair Bowman) and a presentation of that group's recommendations.

Chair Weinstein yielded the floor to Dr. Turk, who started the presentation by praising the team effort.

Chair Weinstein opened up the floor to public comment and introduced Member Rachel to explain the progressive stacking approach and how it fits the meeting.

Barbara Bryant, Navigation Games, remarked that there could be progress with the goals that were detailed. I was curious about funding and that it will always be an issue.

- Member Weinstein answered as a School Committee, how can we help either through the request for funding or policies?
- Member Rachel thanked the members for their work. Everyone believes in outdoor learning and brings up the federal money designated for the pandemic response; there is a solid case to make these recommendations worthy.
- Member Weinstein echoed Member Rachel's sentiment regarding the federal money.

Dr. Turk remarked about the ingenuity out of the meetings—using an example of creating outdoor eating spaces.

Susan Agger followed up with her idea of having a set of logs at each school to provide a grouping and spacing option.

David Landrigan commented that there was strong sentiment in the committee to be inclusive to the community members.

Julie Croston spoke on the federal money and added a reminder of the mental health benefits of outdoor learning. To be able to identify students with a greater need for outdoor time would be critical.

Member Rojas commented on using ESSER funds to fund recommendations and big-ticket items and the way to allocate monies. Asked for clarity with a question to the committee, will these recommendations be reported to the Committee of the Whole?

- Member Weinstein answered yes, especially any recommendations that are time-sensitive. I want to input the members on the draft "Outdoor Learning Recommendation Statement" and how to pose and prioritize requests. Specifically, Recommendations 1,3,4, and 7 are the most pressing—commented that some

buildings don't have space and infrastructure to facilitate outdoor learning. There is a concern for space issues with the High School. One of the hopes is to take the burden of figuring out the answer to the problem presented.

- Dr. Turk responded that section 8 should be part of the consideration.
- Member Rachel agrees with the sections highlighted and wants to be proactive for the next school year. Believes focus should be on recommendations 1 and 3.

Member Weinstein also remarked that recommendation seven could be a pilot program. There needs to be a level of enthusiasm and support for the recommendations.

Dr. Turk said that recommendation 3 opens up the dialogue for city stakeholders and COO Jim Maloney.

Member Rojas wanted clarity as to what is the intent of the recommendations and what happens from there?

- Dr. Turk considered Member Rojas's questions, answered them right now, recommended recommendations 1 and 7, and gave her reasoning. Looked at it incrementally.
- Member Weinstein agreed with Dr. Turk's assessments and recommendations. Noted that they represented a health and safety component.

Jeff Goldenson asked what about events that fall out of the school day? A program outside could be a pilot program for the summer, which has not been defined.

Member Weinstein clarified that could CPSD provide something other than DHSP?

Member Rojas reminded the panel of the existing policy of outside people coming into the buildings and is currently being reviewed. There should be an announcement of organized outdoor activities from the City.

Member Weinstein, building on the scenarios provided, could complement the already in place outdoor activities by the DHSP.

Member Rachel asked to prioritize the recommendations and present a parallel timeline.

Member Rojas responded that as subcommittee members, the School Committee approves recommendations 1 and 7 and refers to section 3 to the Buildings and Grounds subcommittee.

Member Rachel has concerns regarding staffing and space for recommendation 7.

Member Weinstein concurred and said staffing could be an issue with section 3 as well. Speculated could this be a volunteer opportunity?

Jeff Goldenson remarked that these are extenuating circumstances and merit the funding for temporary staffing.

Member Rojas agreed with Mr. Goldenson. He asked Dr. Turk her thoughts on recommendation seven.

- Dr. Turk explained the merits of recommendation seven and that the staffing levels are adjusted to the added scholars. They were reminded that staffing was a barrier when previously raised. Spoke of the support of the paraprofessionals for the lunchtime support. Wants a creative alternative to utilizing staff for this recommendation and reminded that the renumber of remote students is less.

David Landrigan spoke of recommendation three being brought to the School Committee; there are similar scenarios at other schools it would not be too much to assemble.

Andrea Zuniga spoke about the outdoor learning working group; if recommendation three is implemented, it will be utilized.

Member Weinstein concurs about recommendation three and its implementation. Questions why within the recommendations are there just two elementary, one middle and CRLS. Should we consider what is already in place for infrastructure and contemplate building where there is not.

Member Rojas reflected on keeping the language for recommendations.

David Landrigan spoke of the equity of outdoor learning and that issues were being addressed across the district.

Chair Weinstein concluded the next step would be to move forward 1, 3, and 7. They were speculating that recommendations 1 and 7 take the form of motions. Recommendation 3 would be evaluated with what the needs are across the City.

Member Rojas agreed and reiterated the need to incorporate the Building and Grounds Subcommittee.

Member Weinstein would be willing to craft motions after conferring with Member Weinstein and Rojas for the subcommittee and the School Committee body.

Adjourned 7:36.

Attest:



Jennifer Dever Wood

Cambridge School Committee